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ACTION ORM-01

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 IO-10 ISO-00 DHA-02 ITFE-00 OMB-01

INSE-00 HEW-02 AID-05 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 EB-07 /082 W
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R 181915Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9758

INFO AMMISSION GENEVA 585

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 17064

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF, UNHCR, TH

SUBJECT: UNHCR ASSISTANCE TO INDOCHINESE REFUGEES IN THAILAND

REF: A - STATE 185267 B - GENEVA 6182

1. EMBOFFS SPOKE WITH UNHCR DEPUTY REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE (ANGELO RASANAYAGAM) ON AUGUST 6, CONCERNING UNHCR PROGRAM IN THAILAND. EMBOFFS AGAIN MET AUGUST 11 WITH RASANAYAGAM AND UNHCR REP FROM VIENTIANE, MARTIN BARBER, TO DISCUSS CONDITIONS IN H'MONG (MEO) CAMPS IN NAN PROVINCE, WHERE CONDITIONS HAVE BEEN REPORTED AS NOTABLY BAD.

2. BEST NEWS TO EMANATE FROM MEETINGS WAS THAT UNHCR REGIONAL REF - KADRY - DEPARTED BANGKOK ON AUG 7 AND WILL BE REPLACED ON AUGUST 14 BY SWISS NATIONAL NAMED BERTA. DADRY'S DEPARTURE IS WELCOME NEWS AND WE UNDERSTAND BERTA IS A DYNAMIC INDIVIDUAL. UNHCR EFFORT IS IN DESPERATE NEED OF SUCH LEADERSHIP.

3. RASANAYAGAM STATED THAT UNHCR AGREEMENT SIGNED WITH ROYAL THAI GOVERNMENT ON JULY 30 WAS FOR A SUM OF 6.2

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MILLION BAHT (IE. \$3.1 MILLION) AND THAT AN INITIAL

AMOUNT OF 10 MILLION BAHT HAS BEEN GIVEN TO RTG. BASIC RATIONS WERE GIVEN FOR REFUGEES COMPUTED ON THE BASIS OF 10 BAHT PER PERSON PER DAY FOR 40,000 TOTAL PERSONS FOR A PERIOD OF TWO MONTHS. HE CONFIRMED SUPPOSITION OF PARA 2 REFTEL A THAT PROGRAM IS FOR REFUGEES' RELIEF ONLY (IE. SHELTER - 20 MILLION BAHT, SUPPLEMENTARY FOOD - 6 MILLION, WATER SUPPLY - 6 MILLION AND MISCELLANEOUS INCLUDING TRANSPORTATION - 6 MILLION. 10 MILLION BAHT HAVE ALREADY BEEN GIVEN TO RTG. RASANAYAGAM STATED THAT RTG HAS BEEN DRAGGING ITS HEELS (HE DID NOT MENTION THE DILATORY BEHAVIOR OF HIS FORMER MENTOR, KAKRY) AND THE UNHCR PROGRAM WAS DESIGNED TO GET THE RTG ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN THE REFUGEE BUSINESS. INDUCING THE RTG TO MOVE TOWARDS PERMANENT RESETTLEMENT PROJECTS WILL HAVE TO COME LATER, HE SAID. (WE ARE POUCHING A COPY OF THE JULY 30 AGREEMENT/ TO IATF.)

4. MARTIN GAVE EMBOFF RUNDOWN ON HIS RECENT VISIT TO CAMPS IN THE NORTH AND NORTHEAST. HE SAID THAT THERE ARE 1,000 LAO, 2,00 THAI DAM AND 7,000 H'MONG (MEO) LIVING IN THREE CAMPS AT NONG KHAI. THE FIRST TWO ARE IN RELATIVELY GOOD SHAPE, BUT H'MONG ARE NOT DOING WELL, DUE TO LACK OF LEADERSHIP. THERE HAVE BEEN A NUMBER OF DEATHS AMONG THE VERY YOUNG AND VERY OLD: A LAO DOCTOR IS WORKING IN THE H'MONG CAMP BUT THERE IS A SHORTAGE OF MEDICINES. BARBER SAID SOME DEATHS ARE ATTRIBUTABLE TO IGNORANCE OF CAMP INMATES WHO ONLY WILL BRING PATIENTS TO DOCTOR AT THE LAST POSSIBLE MOMENT. BARBER NOTED THAT RTG IS WILLING TO ACCEPT MEDICAL SUPPLIES FROM OTHER COUNTRIES OR UNHCR: WE ARE URGENTLY ATTEMPTING TO LOCATE AND RELEASE SUCH ITEMS TO RTG/UNHCR.

5. BARBER NOTED THAT GOVERNOR IN NAN PROVINCE IS OVERWHELMED BY MAGNITUDE OF REFUGEE PROBLEM FACING HIM. HE HAS RUN OUT OF CASH AND CLEARLY NEEDS ASSISTANCE FROM THE OUTSIDE. AT SAME TIME, BARBER SAID THAT CONDITIONS IN NAN MEO CAMPS HAD "IMPROVED SOMEWHAT" SINCE LAST UNHCR VISIT, BUT THERE ARE STILL SERIOUS PROBLEMS. AT MAE CHARIM THERE ARE 5,007 H'MONG, YAO AND LAO THEUNG. THE CAMP, WHICH IS 16 KILOMETERS SQUARE, IS LOCATED IN AN

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INACCESSABLE AREA FAR REMOVED FROM THAI POPULATION AREAS. WHILE CONDITION APPEAR TO HAVE IMPROVED BARBER NOTED THAT MANY PEOPLE HAD DIED EN ROUTE TO THE CAMP AND MEDICAL CONDITIONS REMAIN VERY BAD. BOLAG SUPPORT ON MEDICAL FRONT APPEARS TO BE RUNNING OUT OF STEAM. THERE IS AN URGENT NEED FOR FOOD AND A CENTRALIZED STORAGE FACILITY. BARBER ESTIMATED THAT THERE WAS ENOUGH RICE ON HAND TO KEEP PEOPLE GOING FOR AT LEAST A WEEK. EMBOFF DISCUSSED

MODALITIES OF GETTING GLUTINOUS RICE FROM MAP STOCK DELIVERED TO NAN AND WE ARE WORKING ON GETTING SUCH SUPPLIES WHICH ARE ALREADY IN UDORN, MOVED TO CAMPS IN NAN AND NONG KHAI.

6. AT PUA CAMP IN NAN THERE ARE 6,056 H'MONG REFUGEES WHO ACCORDING TO BARBER, HAVE "ENOUGH TO KEEP THEM ALIVE, BUT JUST BARELY". THERE IS A SERIOUS SANITATION AND WATER PROBLEM AT THE CAMP, BUT SINCE IT IS LOCATED CLOSE TO A THAI SETTLEMENT, THE H'MONG - WHO REPORTEDLY HAVE ARRIVED WITH BARS OF SILVER - HAVE BEEN BUYING THEIR COMMODITIES ON THE LOCAL MARKET AND, IRONICALLY, DRIVING UP THE PRICE OF GOODS. LOCAL DISTRICT CHIEF, WHO IS DESCRIBED AS A THAI WYATT ERP, APPARANTLY ENJOYS HAVING THE H'MONG IN HIS AREA AND LOOKS FORWARD TO THEIR SERVING AS A MILITARY FORCE TO FIGHT THE INSURGENTS.

7. ASKED BY EMBOFF WHETHER H'MONG FROM LAOS SHOWED SIGNS OF WANTING TO RETURN TO LAOS, BARBER SAID THEY WERE UNEQUIVOCALLY OPPOSED TO RETURNING. 95 PER CENT, HE SURMISED, COULD CARE LESS WHERE THEY LIVED AS LONG AS THEY HAVE LAND TO FARM IN PEACE. BARBER ADDED THAT, UNHCR IN LAOS WILL PROBABLY HAVE TO CLOSE UP SHOP WHEN THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT, UNDER ITS PATHET LAO LEADERSHIP LEARNS THAT UNHCR IS ASSISTING H'MONG REFUGEES SETTLE IN THAILAND. BOTH UNHCR OFFICERS APPEARED WILLING TO LIVE WITH THAT POSSIBILITY.

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